

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE ENCOURAGES PRESIDENT TO BE MORE AGGRESSIVE ON AG EXPORTS

Washington, DC -- The prospects of improving the outlook for American agricultural exports requires a more aggressive approach by the Administration, said Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) in a letter to President Reagan released today.

The letter takes on special relevance given today's report that for the first time the U.S. imported more farm goods than it exported. "Something is radically wrong," Dole said, "when the greatest food producer in the world is buying more agricultural commodities than it is selling. This trend simply cannot continue."

In the letter, Sen. Dole warned Congress could take action by fall if the Administration failed to respond, and suggested six ways to increase farm exports and requested a meeting with the President to discuss the issue.

"Agricultural exports have declined significantly since 1981," Sen. Dole wrote the President, warning "if nothing is done to increase agricultural exports within the next two or three months, I expect pressures could build to such a level in Congress that some legislative action will have to be taken."

Dole attributed declining exports to the increased value of the dollar earlier this decade, foreign debt problems among developing nations, unfair competition in world markets, and U.S. loan rates that are non-competitive with world prices.

While crediting the Administration with addressing these problems, Sen. Dole said in his letter to the President that "it is necessary that more attention be given to utilizing the broad authorities you have overall and the flexibility provided by Congress...to boost exports."

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Dole suggested the United States could gain the high ground on the issue in six different ways:

- * "Lower the effective loan rates (market loan concept), or implement across-the-board export subsidies"
- * "Ensure that the Soviet Union adheres to the long-term agreement...to buy four million metric tons of wheat and corn each year"
- * "Establish a special food aid program for the Philippines and Mexico"
- * "Implement an export credit program targeting traditional ...customers that have been adversely affected by declines in oil prices"
- * "Take an aggressive stand toward unfair agricultural trade in the new round of...GATT" talks
- * "Redirect foreign aid (so as to not) enhance the abilities of foreign nations to compete directly with U.S. farmers"

Sen. Dole concluded his letter to the President, "I am requesting a meeting with you soon to discuss the merits of the ideas I have suggested. I hope that we can agree on most of them."